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ABSTRACT

This seven-part report describes the objectives and outcomes of the Supportive Services for Women Program (SSWP) which operated at Oxnard College between October 1980 and June 1981. After Part I provides introductory material on the need for and genesis of the program, Part II outlines the SSWP's dual goals: to meet the vocational training needs of poverty-level, female heads of households in Ventura County and to simultaneously rectify the gender imbalances within six program areas: agricultural mechanics, industrial maintenance mechanics, diesel mechanics, auto mechanics, truck driving, and landscape maintenance. Part III reviews the specific program objectives corresponding to these goals. Part IV describes the SSWP's design with respect to staff and activities in the areas of recruitment and retention. Part V focuses on the counseling and support services in which the SSWP staff members were involved, while Part VI examines program outcomes with respect to increases in the enrollment of women from Fall 1980 to Spring 1981 for each of the targeted program areas. Finally, Part VII outlines five recommendations for enhancing the success of specialized programs such as the SSWP. (JP)

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OXNARD COLLEGE

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR WOMEN PROGRAM (SSWP)

END OF PROJECT REPORT

1980-1981

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June 30, 1981

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SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR WOMEN PROGRAM (SSWP)

END OF PROJECT REPORT

1980-1981

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SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR WOMEN PROGRAM (SSWP)

END OF PROJECT REPORT

1980 - 1981

I. INTRODUCTION

An examination of United States Census statistics indicates that the concentration of poverty level families in the County of Ventura is substantially higher in the Oxnard College service area than in other parts of the County. Closer scrutiny of the Census also reveals that almost half (48%) of Ventura County's poverty level families with a female head reside within the Oxnard College service area. In addition, that the percentage of poverty level female family heads with children who are in the labor force is lower in Oxnard (36%) than elsewhere in the County implies that the barriers to employment for this group are greater in the Oxnard College service area than they are elsewhere in the County.

A recent study designed to gauge the Oxnard College response to the occupational needs of its service area population produced two major findings which are closely related to these Census findings. Having examined enrollment trends within the Oxnard College occupational student population, the study's first major revelation was that women were under-represented by 80% or more in several of the College's occupational programs. A secondary finding of the study also revealed that a significant number of Oxnard College staff members were of the opinion that sex equity and closely related topics, "should be more important than they currently are."

Given the status of the community reflected through its Census statistics and the findings of an introspective study, Oxnard College embarked upon the task of designing a strategy which would respond not only to the occupational needs of the poverty level female head-of-household, but also to the institution's own needs to respond to the issue of sex equity.

In response to this challenge, Oxnard College staff members conferred and molded the Oxnard College Supportive Services for Women Program (SSWP). A grant proposal to conduct a project under subpart 2 of P.L. 94-482 & 95-40 was drawn up and submitted to the Chancellor's Office for funding on September 24, 1980. The grant was approved for a total of $26,800. The grant period for the OCSSWP was defined as October 1, 1980 to June 30, 1981.

II. PROGRAM GOALS

The goals of the Oxnard College Supportive Services for Women Program (SSWP) have been to recruit, counsel, train and place women in occupations which are non-traditional to their gender. The main thrust of these program goals was to have been extended to a minimum of 70 women in the following Oxnard College vocational programs: Agricultural Mechanics, Industrial Maintenance Mechanics, Diesel Mechanics, Auto Mechanics, Truck Driving and Landscape Maintenance. Each of these programs was targeted as a focal point for program efforts not only because they are considered to be non-

traditional areas of training for women, but also because previous enrollment trends in each of these programs reflected that women had been under-represented by 80% or more in each of these programs.

III. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the OCSSWP are dual in nature. While they were specifically designed with the needs of the poverty level, female-head-of-household in mind, they were also designed as a response to an institutional need to rectify noted gender imbalances within the ranks of its occupational program offerings.

Poverty level female-heads-of-household share similar problems. Along with the disadvantages that accompany poverty level subsistence, these people also share the common experience and burdens of maintaining a family while beset with a plethora of barriers which fetter any efforts made towards becoming economically self-sufficient. Chief among these shared backgrounds are educational backgrounds which reflect minimal or sub-minimal levels of educational attainment and participation along with the downtrodden negative self-images and low levels of self-esteem that develop out of a shared dependency on social welfare systems operating beyond their control. The following objectives have been designed to meet the special needs of poverty level, female heads-of-household:

* Increase and facilitate the access of women into areas of training which have exhibited a high degree of female under-representation.

* Provide occupational training opportunities designed to provide participants with industry acceptable entry level job skills.
* Develop and provide an institutional supportive network designed to facilitate the successful participation of women participating in non-traditional areas of training.
* Provide individual and group counseling opportunities designed to improve participants' self-images and self-confidence.
* Provide experiences designed to develop and improve participants' abilities to seek and secure future employment.
* Provide experiences designed to familiarize participants with potential employers and potential employment sites.

Oxnard College's initial developmental years have coincided with the harsh realities of an era of diminishing fiscal support. Operating within this scenario, the twin tasks of initiating and developing quality occupational education have endured as primary institutional focal points throughout the College's initial five years of operation.

The reputation that Oxnard College's Occupational Cluster Training programs have earned evidences that the College has met the challenge presented by these two tasks. These 30-hour per week training classes leading to the attainment of entry level job skills operating from an Open Entry - Open Exit instructional format are viewed as an apt institutional response not only to the Community's need for accessible

occupational training opportunities, but also to local industrial needs for a trained labor force.

Having responded to the initial challenges of initiating and developing quality occupational education programs, the College has reached a developmental level which affords it the opportunity to focus more attention upon the task of refining the course and content of its instructional offerings. The issue of under-representation of women within the ranks of its occupational education offerings has been one of the first addressed by the College in its refinement stage of development.

The following objectives have been designed to respond to the institutional need for rectifying gender imbalances in the area of occupational education:

* Disseminate the results of past occupational education enrollment statistics to total staff with the intent of alerting staff to gender imbalances within the ranks of students enrolled in occupational programs.
* Establish and implement a specialized recruitment focus designed to encourage the enrollment of students in areas considered to be non-traditional areas of study for their gender.
* Coordinate the efforts of Instructional and Student Service components with the intent of providing a total institutional environment which is conducive to the successful participation of students enrolling in areas considered to be non-traditional to their gender.

* Provide the campus and off-campus communities with specialized opportunities designed to inform them about the availability of non-traditional occupational training opportunities.
* Provide specialized staff whose primary areas of responsibility are to advocate for and coordinate campus efforts and activities designed to meet the needs of students pursuing studies in areas considered to be non-traditional to their gender.
* Provide concentrated attention to the task of integrating the products of specialized efforts to secure the successful participation of students pursuing non-traditional areas of study as a permanent feature of College's service efforts.

IV. PROGRAM DESIGN

The SSWP design has provided for the staff identified on page 8. This staff has focused its efforts on the recruitment, retention and, ultimately, the successful participation of women pursuing training objectives in courses considered to be non-traditional to their gender.

A. RECRUITMENT COMPONENT ACTIVITIES

The primary focus of the SSWP's recruitment component addressed the task of disseminating information on the availability of non-traditional career training opportunities for women at Oxnard College throughout the community. A secondary

focus of the recruitment effort involved the extension of services designed to ease new students into an unfamiliar campus environment.

SSWP staff recruitment component efforts included the following:

* Development of linkages and channels of communication with local social service agencies (PSSA, CETA, EDD, WIN, et.al.)
* Development of local SSWP Advisory Committee.
* Development and dissemination of brochures, pamphlets and posters.
* Dissemination of program information through local news media.
* Presentations to local women's organizations and conferences.
* Provision of pre-registration counseling and referral services.

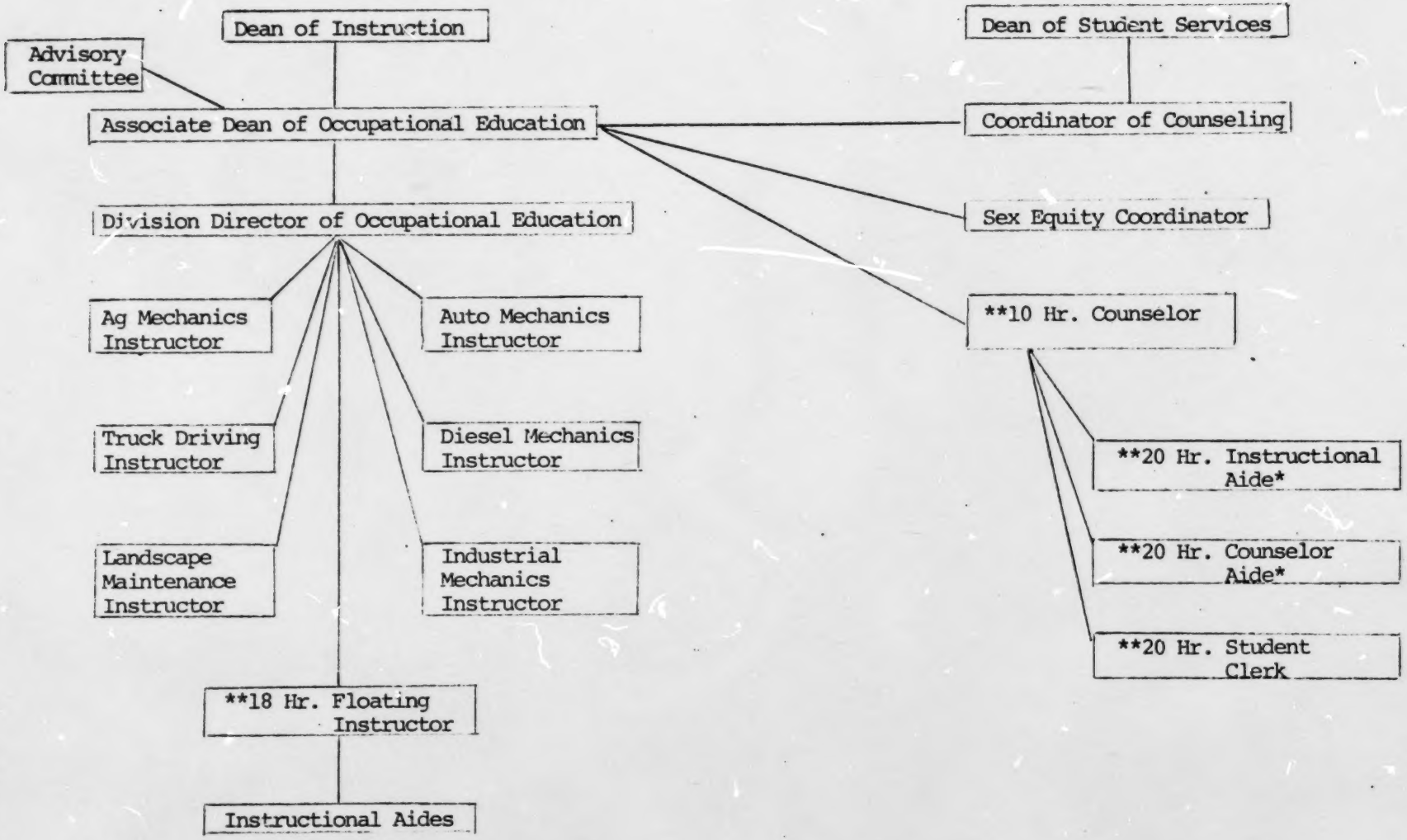
B. RETENTION COMPONENT ACTIVITIES

The SSWP's retention component efforts centered around the provision of services designed not only to encourage the continued attendance of program participants but also to enhance their potentials to benefit from their training experiences.

SSWP staff retention component efforts consisted of the following:

* Provision of floating vocational counselor to provide supplementary, individualized instructional attention exclusively for program participants.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR WOMEN
PROJECT MANAGEMENT



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C. FLOW CHART

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*The duties of the two positions were combined into one 20-hr. position.
**Only these positions were funded by the Supportive Services for Women Grant.

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* Provision of counselor to provide supportive individual and group counseling services exclusively for program participants.
* Provision of specialized courses, conferences and activities geared toward meeting the social-academic needs of women enrolled in non-traditional courses of study.
* Development and dissemination of supportive materials designed to assist program participants with the task of identifying and enlisting assistance of campus and community service outlets.

V. PROGRAM SERVICES

SSWP participants received orientation and referrals to the services available through the following existing campus service outlets: Counseling Center, Human Resource Center, Financial Aid/EOPS Office, Health Services Center, Disabled Students Center, Child Care Center, Tutorial Learing Center and the College Library. In addition, several SSWP participants also enrolled in English acquisition courses offered by the College's ESPIGA program.

SSWP-funded staff members were directly involved in the development and provision of the following services:

* Supplemental vocational shop instruction designed to facilitate the retention and successful participation of women enrolled in non-traditional occupational training areas.

* Weekly Personal Growth Workshops designed to focus on topics of interest for women pursuing non-traditional career training opportunities.
* Weekly informal "Rap Group" sessions designed to provide women with an open forum for discussing and sharing topics of mutual concern and interest.
* Film series designed to screen films of interest to women at differing levels of career awareness and career development.
* Two-day conference for women ("Something for Women") designed to provide panels, speakers and workshops focusing on topics of interest for women interested in and pursuing occupational training opportunities.
* Field trips to prospective sites of employment designed to familiarize participants with actual industrial shops and personnel office procedures.
* Research designed to gather women's referral source information and campus sex equity statistics.
* Alternate course offerings designed to secure the enrollment and participation of women in impacted occupational program areas.

In addition to these specific services, the individual counseling needs of SSWP participants were readily addressed by different members of the College counseling staff. The efforts of the part-time SSWP counselor to provide readily available individual counseling services were supplemented by the availability of the Displaced Homemaker Program counselor, the campus Sex Equity Coordinator for Occupational Education and other members of the counseling staff.

VI. PROGRAM RESULTS

Table 1

Industrial Mechanics	Truck-driving	Auto Mechanics	Diesel Mechanics	Ag Mechanics	Landscape Maintenance
Fall 1980 M-27 F-7(20%)	Fall 1980 M-22 F-1(4%)	Fall 1980 M-44 F-0	Fall 1980 M-35 F-0	Fall 1980 M-61 F-6(8%)	Fall 1980 M-21 F-8(27%)
Spr 1981 M-19 F-10(34%)	Spr 1981 M-19 F-5(20%)	Spr 1981 M-64 F-1(1%)	Spr 1981 M-34 F-0	Spr 1981 M-51 F-7(12%)	Spr 1981 M-26 F-13(33%)

Table 1 demonstrates the most readily identifiable SSWP result. It illustrates, by semester, the total number of women enrolled in the six non-traditional for women training clusters originally identified as target focal points of SSWP efforts.

While female enrollment in these target clusters represents only 9% of the total enrollment, a Fall semester to Spring semester comparison in four of the six clusters indicates growth in female enrollments. In particular, female enrollment in the Industrial Mechanics and Landscape Maintenance clusters rose from 20% to 34% and from 27% to 33% respectively. The Truck Driving and Agricultural Mechanics/Welding clusters whose respective female enrollments grew from 4% to 20% and from 8% to 12% exhibited moderate female enrollment growth rates. Conversely, the 0 to 1% female enrollment growth rates in the Diesel Mechanics and Auto Mechanics clusters demonstrates that they remain as bastions of masculinity.

The previously described growth in female enrollment rates evidences that SSWP efforts have played a role in rectifying previously noted gender imbalances within the ranks of the College's occupational education offerings.

The total enrollment of 58 women in these six target clusters might be construed as evidence for the contention that the SSWP did not achieve its stated goal of serving a minimum of seventy (70) women. Such a contention would not take into account SSWP staff advocacy and assistance in the development of alternate course offerings designed to provide entry level job skills similar to those offered by the regularly scheduled Industrial Mechanics cluster program facilitated the full-time enrollment of an additional seven women. The development of a series of "NOT FOR MEN ONLY" courses also resulted in the part-time enrollment of an additional 62 women. A most recent development, the provision of summer session classes, exclusively for women, in the areas of Agricultural Mechanics/Welding and Industrial Mechanics, has facilitated the full-time enrollment of an additional 22 women.

An accurate assessment of SSWP success in addressing the challenge of increasing female enrollment in non-traditional areas of occupational training should include the additional female enrollments noted here. In essence, the total female enrollment resultant from SSWP efforts evidences that the SSWP has surpassed its stated objective of serving a minimum of seventy (70) women.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

While SSWP results do indicate that its efforts have met with some success in increasing the total female enrollment in the College's non-traditional for women career training areas, the SSWP experience has produced some staff observations that relate to enhancing the possibilities of success for specialized programs such as that embodied by the SSWP.

The following recommendations are based on SSWP observations made throughout the tenure of the program.

1. Student access to the College's occupational cluster programs could be further facilitated if the inception of specialized program focuses were to coincide more closely with the College's instructional cycle.

2. The focus of specialized programs could be strengthened and further extended if more provision were made to articulate and coordinate campus efforts with the efforts of off campus social service agencies.

3. The integration of specialized programs into the College mainstream could be further accommodated if the total campus community were to be informed about the expected impact(s) of specialized program focuses on existing campus components prior to the inception of specialized program activities.

5. The overall success of specialized program focuses could be further accommodated if the staffing of these programs were to be more in step with the College's instructional cycle and if the responsibility for program coordination were to be more carefully designated.

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